



The State of New Hampshire
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Thomas S. Burack, Commissioner

January 9, 2008

The Honorable Judith T. Spang, Chairman
Resources, Recreation, and Development
Legislative Office Building, Room 305
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1295, establishing a commission to study issues relating to stormwater.

Dear Chairman Spang:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1295, which would create a commission to study issues relating to stormwater. The Department of Environmental Services (DES) supports the intent of this bill. As you know, we have worked closely with you as the prime sponsor to help develop amendments to the original bill that would make the commission smaller, thus more manageable for the chair, and clarify the commission duties.

Stormwater is emerging as one of the most important water quality issues facing New Hampshire for a number of reasons, including the following:

- Stormwater runoff can be a source of pollutants that degrade water quality. These pollutants include bacteria, the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus, oil and grease, and chloride from salt used for the deicing of roads and parking lots. Unless managed properly, pollutants in runoff can cause water quality degradation of surface waters and can threaten well water quality for drinking water supplies.
- Municipal separate stormwater systems (MS4s) are facing more stringent federal regulations adopted by the USEPA in recognition of the negative water quality impacts of uncontrolled stormwater discharges. In addition to infrastructure improvements, organizational improvements and alternatives such as creation of stormwater utility districts need to be considered to help municipalities support improvements.
- Stormwater from new development may have negative impacts, both during construction and operation, unless projects are constructed properly.
- Extreme storm events may be occurring more frequently due to climate change, sometimes overwhelming existing systems and raising questions as to what appropriate design criteria should be for new systems.

For these reasons, the work and recommendations of a stormwater commission will be very important for development of improved, sustainable stormwater management practices in New Hampshire. The commission's work will also complement other ongoing legislative initiatives and commissions for improved water management.

In summary, DES fully supports the creation of a stormwater commission. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to call Paul Currier at 271-3289 or me at 271-3449.

Sincerely,

Michael Wells, Asst. Comm.
for Thomas S. Burack
Commissioner

cc: Rep. Spang
Rep. Borden
Sen. Cilley

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